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EXPERIMENT STATION FILE

An Address by E. Merritt before the National Conference of State Leaders
of Home Demonstration Work in Northern and Western States.

1916?

The problem of American agriculture during the war, and probably for several years thereafter, will be to produce enough breadstuffs, meats, and fats, not only to feed the United States but to make up a large part of the deficiency in European countries. In the supply of meat, in dairy products, beef and pork, and oil-producing plants, not only must the United States maintain its present production, but increase it. Or, looking at our agricultural problem from another point of view, our farmers must increase their production at a time when the farm labor supply is being decreased by drafting the men into the army and by the increasing demands of those industries essential to the proper conduct of the war.

If the United States were to send as large a proportion of its population to the front as Canada has done, it would require an army of 5,000,000 men. Canada, in spite of this heavy drain on her labor supply, has not only maintained her agricultural showing, but has increased it. In order that women may form an opinion as to their function in the national agricultural program, a brief review of what has been and is being done in the European countries engaged in the war will point the way for our women to be of service.

WORK IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE

In a majority of the continental European countries the farms use little agricultural machinery, the principal live stock being pigs, chickens, and milch cows, and the crops require an intensive cultivation. For example, Germany has approximately 8,400,000 acres of potatoes, yielding 50,000,000 tons annually. The majority of these potatoes are lifted by women. Germany has two and a half million farms

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which cultivate five acres or more each, yet only 300,000 farms report mowing machines. These instances are cited as being more or less typical of countries on the Continent. Of the agricultural workers in such countries as France, Italy, Austria, and Germany, between one-third and one-half are women, and of the women on farms in these countries, between sixty-five and seventy-five per cent of those over twenty years of age, are primarily engaged in field operations. Thus, when the war broke out, there were women on all the farms who knew how to carry on the operations, and the war simply meant that they were compelled to do the field work as formerly, but to an even greater extent.

WORK IN ENGLAND AND WALES

The conditions in England and Wales, however, are found to be somewhat different. Live stock has a very prominent position in their agriculture. They have extensive systems of pasturing and use much agricultural machinery. In their field operations the majority of agricultural workers are on a wage basis, whereas in most of the countries on the Continent the agricultural workers have a direct monetary interest in the crops.

As the war progressed, the agricultural situation in England and Wales became of increasing importance. When one realizes that one-third to one-half of the agricultural products used in Great Britain are imported, and that practically all of the agricultural workers are men, it is evident that the raising of an army by the volunteer system made very serious inroads upon the available workers to carry on farm operations.

On account of the submarine warfare Great Britain has attempted not only to maintain its past agricultural production, but to increase it. In order to do this, an active campaign was undertaken to

place women on the land. This work is carried on under the direct supervision of their National Board of Agriculture. The organization is somewhat similar to that found in our county agent organization, there being district agents; a county committee, with a county organizer, and local leaders in each county. The functions of the county and local organizations are, first, to recruit women land workers; second, to train them; and third, to find farms for them to work on. The recruiting has been carried on by means of posters, personal visits, meetings, competitions, etc.

TRAINING FOR FARM WORK

As soon as a woman indicates her desire to take up work on the land, she must submit to a physical examination in order that the committee may be sure that she is physically fit to endure the strain of farm work. She is also examined as to her personality, in order to determine whether she can get on with farm conditions.

After she has been accepted, she is sent to one of the practice farms. These farms are of various types. In some instances they are agricultural colleges that have been turned over to the training of women. In other instances, the women are gathered together in a home and sent out to the neighboring farms to be trained by experienced farm workers. In still other instances successful farmers have turned their farms over to the county organizations to be used in training women, the women living on the farm and participating in all operations. During the training period the workers are without any expense as far as their living is concerned, and are furnished with a complete outfit, consisting of boots, clogs, leggings, breeches, hat, and two pairs of overalls.

It is interesting to note in this connection the attitude that the city women are taking when they go into the country to work. In

the past it has been the ambition of women on a farm to imitate the dress and style of their sisters in the city. However, when the city women were recruited to go out and undertake farm work, they at once adopted a different costume from the one that was usually worn - one that enabled them to carry on their work with the greatest ease and comfort.

ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS.

The most usual types of agricultural labor undertaken by the workers have been those connected with live stock and intensive farming, such as growing mangel, raising calves, milking, care of live stock, etc. The period of training generally lasted four weeks. If, at the end of that time, the students showed sufficient skill, they were listed and efforts were made to place them on farms. However, before any of the women land workers were allowed to undertake farm work, the farm was inspected and suitable quarters were found for the workers. Their experience seems to show that it is impracticable to send the women out to work as individuals, but that they must be kept together. As a result of this situation, usually one member of the group becomes matron of the party and general chaperone. Another, more skilled than the rest, becomes group leader or forewoman. Although many of the workers were from the well-to-do classes, they were compelled to accept the prevailing wage in the community and were required to do as much as the regular agricultural workers for the same pay. In order to increase the demand for women workers, and to add interest in this kind of work, competitions have been held throughout the country. The competitors were judged upon their ability to milk, kill and dress poultry, harness horses, hoe root-crops, drive a harrow, spread manure, trim a hedge, and drive a cart. Thus it is found that our English-speaking allies have increased their production under actual war conditions. Among continental countries the

extensive system of agricultural production, made it very difficult to increase either the labor supply or the yields.

CONDITIONS IN UNITED STATES

Those who are familiar with conditions in European countries are able to realize that the position of women on our farms is very different from that either on the Continent or in England or Wales. However, the women on farms in the United States have a direct monetary interest in its products, as is characteristic of continental agriculture, but very few participate in the field operations, a condition found to exist in England. Although the census reports that there are 1,800,000 women in the United States successfully engaged in agriculture, it also shows that 750,000 of them are under 20 years of age and 1,050,000 are negroes. The majority of agricultural workers are found in the Southern States. It is very evident that most of the agricultural workers in this country are those connected with cotton farming. This probably will solve the question of labor to plant and harvest this crop, but as the size of our army increases, and the demand for munitions and other factory products begins to draw an increasing number of men from the farms, in other parts of the country and in connection with other crops women will be called upon to participate in the field operations.

The first lines of work in which women will be likely to increase their activity are those in which they are already accustomed to engage. President Wilson has pointed out that the army of the commissary is fully as necessary to the successful prosecution of the war as the regular army, and that the individual can best serve the nation by increasing his efficiency and production along the lines of work in which he is usually engaged.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is pointed out that the study of history is not only a means of understanding the past, but also a means of understanding the present and the future. The author argues that the study of history is essential for the development of a nation and for the well-being of its people.

The second part of the paper discusses the role of the government in the development of the United States. It is pointed out that the government has played a major role in the development of the country, and that its actions have shaped the course of history. The author argues that the government should continue to play a role in the development of the country, and that its actions should be guided by the principles of justice and fairness.

The third part of the paper discusses the role of the individual in the development of the United States. It is pointed out that the actions of individuals have shaped the course of history, and that the individual has a responsibility to contribute to the development of the country. The author argues that the individual should be encouraged to exercise his or her rights and responsibilities, and that the government should provide the necessary support and protection.

The fourth part of the paper discusses the role of the future in the development of the United States. It is pointed out that the future is uncertain, and that the actions of the present will shape the future. The author argues that the future should be planned for, and that the actions of the present should be guided by the principles of justice and fairness.

The fifth part of the paper discusses the role of the United States in the world. It is pointed out that the United States has a responsibility to lead the world, and that its actions should be guided by the principles of justice and fairness. The author argues that the United States should continue to play a role in the world, and that its actions should be guided by the principles of justice and fairness.

WORK FOR THOSE ALREADY ON FARMS

The first line of work in which women have participated and in which they might increase their activity, is the care of the vegetable garden. The last census reports that one out of every four or five farms showed no vegetables produced. Every farm or village lot should produce enough vegetables to supply the family with the maximum nourishment, so as to release other more concentrated foods for the army and our allies. Poultry raising is another phase of farming in which women have always had a large share. The average farm flock is too small and many times not sufficiently productive. If the women can be trained to increase the size of the flock and its productivity, it will add greatly to the meat available for other uses. If the village lots are of sufficient size, a small flock of chickens can be added with but little expense, and will give the family a cheap source of eggs and meat. A part of woman's work on the farm is to make butter. Between fifty and sixty per cent of the butter in the United States is farm-made, and forty per cent of the butter of commerce comes from the same source. If this farm product can be increased in quantity and improved in quality, it will add greatly to our food supply. The fact that farm butter usually brings a lower price than other fats causes the farm woman to use an excessive amount in her cooking, whereas if she were trained to make the type of butter that could be sold, not on the basis of its cooking value but on the basis of its food value, she would be encouraged to conserve butter and increase her use of other fatty materials.

The census also reported that in New England States only one out of three farms reported swine slaughtered, in the Middle Atlantic States one out of two, and in the North Central States two out of three. We can assume that where swine were not slaughtered these farms did not

The first of these was the discovery of gold in California in 1848. This led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The second was the discovery of gold in Nevada in 1859. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The third was the discovery of gold in Colorado in 1858. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The fourth was the discovery of gold in Idaho in 1860. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The fifth was the discovery of gold in Montana in 1862. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The sixth was the discovery of gold in Wyoming in 1869. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The seventh was the discovery of gold in Utah in 1863. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The eighth was the discovery of gold in Arizona in 1863. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The ninth was the discovery of gold in New Mexico in 1861. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The tenth was the discovery of gold in Texas in 1856. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The eleventh was the discovery of gold in Louisiana in 1862. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The twelfth was the discovery of gold in Mississippi in 1862. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

The thirteenth was the discovery of gold in Alabama in 1862. This also led to a great influx of people to the state, and the population grew rapidly.

have a home supply of pork. Attention has constantly been called to the fact that the South was not feeding itself, and the farmers have been urged again and again to produce on the farm their own food and feed. The census reports and the investigations of the Office of Farm Management indicate that the farms in the Northern and Western States are fully as great transgressors in this respect as the South. It is well worth considering that the labor income of many farms is spent entirely for things which might have been produced at home on those farms.

Thus it would seem that the type of farming in which farm women might first increase their activity are those in which they are at present partly engaged. Indeed, it might be well worth while for the women on farms to ask colleges of agriculture and demonstration agents to include courses where special instruction can be given them, in the making of garden, in poultry raising, making butter, etc.

On every farm there are grown crops which require the maximum of labor at certain seasons of the year: in growing wheat, the time of harvesting; corn, the time of cultivation; certain fruits and vegetables, the time of picking. The acreage of individual crops that can be grown on a farm is materially influenced by the amount that can be accomplished during these periods of maximum labor requirements. If the farm women can so arrange their work as to participate in the farm operations at such times, they can thereby increase the acreage in crops. The farmer can carry on the farming operations at other times with his usual labor supply. Thus if the women can be trained to manage horses so as to drive a reaper and binder, ride a cultivator, and do the lighter work connected with gathering fruit and vegetables, they would aid materially in increasing our food supply. Indeed, those women who know how to operate an automobile could with a little additional training operate tractors.

WORK FOR THOSE IN SMALLER CITIES AND TOWNS

In the small towns and cities, in addition to the women on the farm, there are many women who have previously lived on farms and who are familiar with many of the farm operations. By proper organization these women might be recruited to assist the farmer with field operations and the farmer's wife with her functions. Certain members of the group could be assigned to care for the children, while others went into the country to work. In many parts of the country this type of labor gathers the hops, fruits, truck-crops, and the like. The war emergency calls for even greater effort along this line. In many towns and cities there is a demand for local leaders in home garden work, and women can in many instances attend schools giving training specially for this purpose.

WORK FOR THOSE FROM LARGER CITIES

If it becomes necessary to recruit women agricultural workers in this country, the experience of England will probably be valuable to us. This would seem to indicate that women should be trained for those farm operations in which they can work and can live in groups. Their training should be for work in connection with market gardening, the gathering and packing of fruits, and certain types of intensive agriculture. It might also be arranged that women could be trained to assist in dairying, but if this were undertaken, a sufficient number of farms would have to be found in a given community to require the services of a group of women. Wherever women can be found who are willing to go out on farms to work, they should undertake training under a trained worker. This serves not only to harden them physically, but gives them skill in the technique, so that when they undertake work under actual farming conditions, farmers will have respect for their ability.

